Grade 8 English Language Arts

# UNIT ORDER

1. Expository Writing
2. Using Text Evidence to Respond to Short Fiction
3. Argumentation: A Non- Fiction Study
4. Argumentative Research and Writing
5. Fiction Study
6. Paired Passages Study: Text Sets from Fiction and Non-Fiction
7. Myths, Traditions, and Modern Fiction
8. Narrative Writing
9. Novel Study

# This curriculum is aligned to the PA Academic Standards for English Language Arts (PA Core ELA adopted March 1, 2014) for Grade 8.

# Accelerated Reader

* Students will be expected to read independently outside of class and demonstrate this independent reading through the use of Accelerated Reader quizzes.

o ELA teachers should provide frequent assistance and feedback to students to help them select books that are at the appropriate independent reading level. This is especially critical when reading non-fiction text.

o Book selection (within the appropriate reading level range) should be based on student self-selection. It is acceptable for ELA teachers to set minimum requirements for non-fiction reading, but these minimums must not constitute more than 1/3 of the total points.

* Independent reading via Accelerated Reader will count for 10% of the marking period grade.
  + Grade may be based on total points, accuracy, and/or meeting reading level targets.

# Writing

* Students should be expected to write **everyday** throughout the ELA class for a variety of purposes, in varied lengths, and in a variety of formats.
* Writing is encouraged as a form of formative and summative assessment, as well as for active engagement within the classroom giving every student the opportunity to participate.
  + Formative Assessment Examples: bellringers based on objectives for the day before, exit slips, mid-class checks for understanding, vocabulary activities
  + Summative Assessment Examples: Text-Dependent Written Responses, Essays
  + Engagement Strategies: Pre-reading predictions, making text connections, questioning during reading, thinking and analyzing quick writes
* Writing should be shared/reviewed (peer, group, teacher, etc). A generic time for “daily journal" is discouraged. Feedback on writing should be provided frequently and in a timely manner. Writing should be directly related to the instructional content and used as a strategy with purpose. Writing can be used for further editing and/or grammar instruction.
* Formal instruction in expository, argumentative, and narrative writing is included within the curriculum

# Grammar

* Grammar instruction will occur within the context of writing with mini-grammar lessons and conferences incorporated throughout the curriculum. Objectives for grammar instruction are included throughout the curriculum outline.
  + Mini-grammar lessons (10-20 minutes) include a focus on a specific skill, rule or grammar principle and then students reviewing and editing their own writing.
  + Grammar topics are included / assessed as focus correction areas in writing.
  + Assessment of grammar is included within editing writing activities and focus correction area within writing assignments.

MINI-GRAMMAR LESSONS - GRADE 8

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| --- | --- |
| Grammar Topic | Unit |
| Gerunds | Expository Writing |
| Participles | Expository Writing |
| Infinitives | Expository Writing |
| Use verbs in the active and passive tense | Myths, Traditions, Modern Fiction |
| Form and use verbs in the indicative, imperative, interrogative, conditional, and subjunctive mood. | Text Evidence |
| Correct inappropriate shifts in verb voice and mood | Text Evidence |
| Misplaced and dangling modifiers | Myths, Traditions, Modern Fiction |
| Correct inappropriate shifts in pronoun number and person | Paired Passages |
| Correct vague pronouns | Paired Passages |
| Correct inappropriate shifts in verb tense | Myths, Traditions, Modern Fiction |
| Fragments and run-on sentences | Text Evidence |
| Correctly use frequently confused words (ex: to, too, two) | Paired Passages |
| Ensure subject-verb and pronoun-antecedent agreement | Text Evidence |
| Use punctuation to indicate a break or a pause (i.e. comma, ellipsis, and dash) | Fiction |
| Use an ellipsis to indicate an omission | Fiction |
| Use punctuation to set off nonrestrictive/parenthetical elements | Fiction |
| Use punctuation to separate items in a series | Expository |
| Use verbs in the active and passive voice to achieve particular effect | Narrative |
| Use verbs in the conditional and subjunctive mood to achieve particular effects | Narrative |
| Eliminate wordiness and redundancy | Argumentative Writing |
| Vary sentence patterns for meaning, interest and style | Expository Writing |
| Consistency in style and tone | Argumentative Writing |
| Choose punctuation for effect | Argumentative Writing |
| Choose words and phrases for effect | Argumentative Writing |

# Vocabulary Instruction

**5-10 minutes per day of embedded vocabulary instruction**

#### Objectives:

* Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on curricular reading and content.
  + Use context as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
  + Use common Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word.
* Demonstrate an understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meaning.
  + Interpret figurative language
  + Use the relationship between particular words to better understand each of the words (ex: synonym and antonym)
  + Recognize and explain the meaning of common idioms, adages, and proverbs

#### Instructional Guidance:

* Can be at beginning, middle or end of period.  Can be spread throughout class period (ex: introduce a word as a pre-reading activity for a selected passage)
* **5-7 words per week (or “active” at a time) maximum** – Vocabulary words selected from text(s) being read and studied in class and not from isolated lists. Vocabulary words can be introduced individually or in very small chunks.
* Words “**worked with 8-12 times**” – in small chunks before final assessment. Based on formative assessment during word work, some words may be ready for final assessment after 6 interactions while others may need to stay “active” and be worked with 12-15 times.
* NOT intro on Monday, define from dictionary, write sentences, test on Friday
* “Retired” words should be reinforced continually and reviewed (can be re-assessed) using word wall activities throughout the year.

Sample Instructional Routines

* + **3 minutes** – Bellringer activity while you are taking roll – have students pick one word already introduced from Word Wall and write an antonym (word or phrase) for it.  Pair /share and then group share a few.
  + **7 minutes** – Introduce new word from reading during “before reading” activity – give definition – have students draw picture to describe/define based on what you said – pair/share – clarify as needed- add to word wall
  + **6 minutes** – as you transition from one activity or topic to another part of lesson – have students quick write a way the word “consensus” currently being studied relates to 2 other words from word wall somehow and give explanation/reason they “relate” – Pair/share/group share/clarify as needed.
  + **4 minutes** – Exit Slip – as a class you have worked with the word “deliberate” at least 8-12 times.  Ask students to write a sentence using the word deliberate or write a explanation of what deliberate means on an exit slip.  Collect and grade as an assessment for the word (you’ll need to be sure absent students complete this later).
  + **10 minutes** – You introduced/added the word “consensus” yesterday to the Word Wall.  Today you review the Latin root “con” – have students in partners (maybe clock partners) brainstorm all of the words they can think of that contain “con” and then group share and determine how they relate to Latin root (or if they are a “false root”). During upcoming weeks – take any opportunity to show/use words with that root or recognize when students do.
  + **6 minutes** – Based on exit slips yesterday and pair/share discussion, you realize students are using emaciated as a synonym for sick and don’t understand the real meaning of the word (excessively thin). You show a drawing (carefully chosen to not be too graphic) of an emaciated dog and a picture of a person with the flu on the whiteboard and ask students to quick write the difference between emaciated and sick.

#### *Assessment:*

* Exit slips or other types of written assessment of single or multiple vocabulary words
* Objective quizzes
* Question and answer
* Writing activities related to vocabulary objectives
* Homework/classroom activities related to objectives

#### Suggested Instructional Activities/Vocabulary strategies:

* Word/concept maps
* Quick drawing and quick writings
* Word Wall activities
* Bell-ringers and exit slips
* Contextual redefinition
* Root study connected to word
* Word sorts

# Read - Aloud

Purposes: improve listening skills, build vocabulary, model and aide development of reading comprehension, model fluent reading, allow all students to access increasingly difficult and challenging text, practice development of active reading strategies

* Approximately 15 minutes per day devoted to teacher read-aloud activities (including associated Before-During-After reading and discussion activities).
* Texts should be of varying lengths and genres (ex: novels, short stories, poems, non-fiction). Texts at a higher level than student independent reading level are encouraged. Text to be read aloud may be text to be used within instructional units outlined below or reading for group enjoyment.
* Students should be actively engaged in before-during-after reading activities to facilitate comprehension and to prevent this from becoming a passive student activity.

#### Assessment:

* Group and small group structured discussion activities (with rubric)
* Objective quizzes
* Question and answer
* Written responses (including text-dependent analysis)

#### Suggested Instructional Activities

* Teacher modeling of think-aloud and active reading strategies
* B-D-A strategies (before, during, after reading)
* Pair/sharing and small group sharing
* Listen, Make a Mental Movie, Sketch, Pair/Share activity

# Unit # 1 : Expository Writing (3-4 weeks)

**Pre-Assessment** – Expository Writing Prompt (cold prompt – not text dependent) scored using expository writing rubric (holistic score of 0-4). Score this essay using holistic rubric (not counted in student grade) to provide a baseline. Return to students with general feedback, keep to use for editing throughout the unit and refer back to at the end of the unit to measure growth.

Objectives

* Demonstrate the ability to **plan for writing** (using outline, graphic organizer, etc).
* Write an effective **thesis statement**.
* Demonstrate the use of various styles of effective **introductions.**
* Demonstrate the ability to **organize an essay** in a clear and logical manner.
* Write **body paragraphs** that include topic sentences as well as relevant content, information, examples, and details.
* Use a variety of **transitions** to organize and clarify the relationships between ideas and concepts.
* Demonstrate the use of **various sentence structures** within an essay.
  + Write a sentence opening with a present participle, gerund, or infinitive.
  + Write a sentence opening with an adjective phrase.
  + Write using an adjective clause.
* Write a **conclusion** that effectively concludes an essay and follows from and support the information or explanation presented.
* Demonstrate the use of a **formal style** of writing (avoidance of first person, etc).
* Demonstrate the ability to **revise writing** to eliminate wordiness, redundancy, irrelevant details, and to promote clarity.
* Demonstrate the ability to use effective **peer and self-editing** strategies.
* **Mini-Grammar Lessons**
  + Explain the function of verbals (gerunds, participles and infinitives) in general and their function in particular sentences.
  + Use punctuation to separate items in a series.
  + Vary sentence patterns for meaning, interest, and style.
  + Recognize and correct fragments and run-on sentences.

Assessments

* Assessments of ***individual*** objectives/skills (objective quizzes, writing exercises and activities)
* Writing to learn activities for formative assessment
* Required: **Minimum of three full length essay responses** (at least one must be independent prompt completed with no assistance) graded based on focus correction areas
* Graphic organizer assessments
* Peer and self editing exercises

Instructional Guidance

Direct instruction, modeling, guided practice and independent practice (graded assessments) must be provided for each of the objective components above individually as well as holistically in essay writing.

**Sentence patterns/structures**

* Write a sentence opening with a present participle, gerund, or infinitive.
  + Infinitive example: *To improve his mind became his goal.*
  + Participle example: *Writing hurriedly, I finished the test.*
  + Gerund example: *Creating powerful sentences requires creativity and variety.*
* Write a sentence opening with an adjective phrase.
  + *Passionate on the subject, he spoke for an hour.*
  + *White with fear, the student entered the principal’s office.*
* Write a sentence using an adjective clause.
  + *The team that makes the fewest mistakes often wins.*
  + *He introduced me to his girlfriend, whom he obviously adores.*

Suggested Texts and Resources

* PSSA Holistic Scoring Rubrics, Item Samples and Sample Prompts
* PDE SAS
* Writing graphic organizers
* Collins Writing Focus Correction Areas

# Unit # 2 : Fiction Study (3-4 weeks)

Objectives

* **Analyze the development of the theme or central idea** of a text over the course of the text**,** including its **relationship to the characters, setting, and plot**.
* Provide an **objective summary** of a text.
* **Analyze** how **particular lines of dialogue or incidents** in a story, drama, or poem propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision. (*Text Dependent Written Analysis required)*
* Analyze how **differences in the points of view** of the characters and the audience or reader (e.g. created through the use of dramatic irony) create such effects as suspense or humor.
* **Mini-Grammar Lessons**
  + Use punctuation to set off non-restrictive/parenthetical elements.
  + Use punctuation to indicate a break or a pause (i.e. comma, ellipsis, and dash).

Assessments

* Required: Minimum of two graded text dependent analysis questions based on objectives (including one for analyzing particular lines of dialogue or incidents)
* Written response (varying lengths)
* Objective quizzes/tests
* Class and/or homework activities directly related to objectives
* Required FINAL UNIT ASSESSMENT: Must include a cold text passage with PA Core level multiple choice questions and text dependent response.

Instructional Guidance

Texts must include a variety of genres including stories, drama and poetry to meet above objectives.

Note that objectives require that students apply these skills to a variety of texts. It is not sufficient to just define, identify, or explain. For example, students must not only identify figurative language in text, but they also have to be able to interpret and analyze its use in a passage.

Suggested Texts and Resources

* PA Core PSSA Scoring Rubrics and Item Samples
* PDE SAS
* Text passages/resources from anthology
* Grade level/Lexile level passages from readworks.org
* Common Core text exemplar list
* Excerpts from novel s on grade 8 novel list

# Unit #3: Myths, Tradition and Modern Fiction (2-3 weeks)

Objectives

* Identify common themes in myths and traditional stories (ex: violence begets violence, fate, danger of arrogance, reward for good, punishment for evil, heroism).
* Identify common patterns of evens in myths and traditional stories (ex: hero’s quest).
* Identify common character types in myths and traditional stories.
* Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths and traditional stories, including describing how the materials is rendered new.
* **Mini-Grammar Lessons**
  + Recognize and correct misplaces and dangling modifiers.
  + Form and use verbs in the active and passive tense.
  + Correct inappropriate shifts in verb tense.

Minimum Readings and Instructional Guidance

* 3 myths and/or traditional stories
* 3 modern works for comparison (various genres)
* Example: Common theme in myths and traditional stories of “prince in exile” (ex: Rama, Oedipus, Krishna, Beauty and Beast, Snow White) reflected in modern stories such as Harry Potter and Luke Skywalker in Star Wars.

Assessment

* Written response (varying lengths)
* Objective quizzes/tests
* Class and/or homework activities directly related to objectives
* Required: Minimum of ONE text dependent written analysis analyzing how modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths and traditional stories, including describing how the material Is rendered new.

Suggested Texts and Resources

* PDE SAS
* PA Core and Common Core Resources

# Unit # 4: Using Text Evidence to Respond to Short Fiction (4-5 weeks)

Objectives

* Develop analysis of a text using specific, relevant **evidence from the text** to support claims, ideas, opinions and inferences and demonstrating an understanding of the text.
* Cite textual evidence that most strongly support an analysis of what the text says **explicitly**.
* Make **inferences**, draw **conclusions**, and/or make **generalizations** about text and cite specific, relevant text evidence for support.
* Determine a **theme or central idea** of a text.
* **Mini-Grammar Lessons**
  + Form and use verbs in the indicative, imperative, interrogative, conditional, and subjunctive mood.
  + Correct inappropriate shifts in verb voice and mood.
  + Ensure subject-verb and pronoun-antecedent agreement.

Assessments

* Graphic organizers
* Student written responses
* Objective quizzes/tests
* Class and/or homework activities directly related to objectives
* REQUIRED SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT: Cold passage and text dependent written analysis (prompt based on objective from above). Scored using PSSA text dependent analysis scoring guide.

Instructional Guidance

Provide direct instruction, modeling, guided practice, and independent practice focused on using specific text evidence. Also, provide direct instruction, modeling, guided practice, and independent practice focused on inferences, conclusions, generalization and theme/central idea.

Use a mix of short fiction (short stories, poems, drama excerpts, novel excerpts, etc).

Suggested Texts and Resources

* PA Core PSSA Scoring Rubrics and Item Samples
* PDE SAS
* Text passages/resources from anthology
* Grade level/Lexile level passages from readworks.org
* Common Core text exemplar list
* Excerpts from novel s on grade 8 novel list

# Unit # 5 : Narratives and Narrative Writing (2 weeks)

Objectives

* Engage and orient the reader by **establishing a context and point of view** and **introducing a narrator and/or characters**.
* **Organize an event sequence** that unfolds naturally and logically to support the writer’s purpose.
* Use **narrative techniques** such as dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
* Use a variety of **transitional words, phrases, and clauses** to convey sequence, to signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another, and to show the relationships among experiences and events.
* Use **precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language** to capture the action and convey experiences and events.
* Provide a **conclusion** that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.
* **Mini-Grammar Lessons**
  + Use verbs in the active and passive voice to achieve particular effect.
  + Use verbs in the conditional and subjunctive mood to achieve a particular effect.

Assessments

* Assessments of ***individual*** objectives/skills related to narrative writing (objective quizzes, writing exercises and activities)
* Required: **Minimum of two full length essay responses** (at least one **must** be independent prompt with no assistance) graded based on focus correction areas
* Graphic organizer assessments
* Peer and self editing exercises

Instructional Guidance

Reinforce writing skills and mini-grammar lessons taught in previous units. Emphasize the personal narrative essay as well as the narrative story.

Suggested Texts and Resources

* Writing graphic organizers
* Collins Writing Focus Correction Areas
* PDE PA Core PSSA Item Sampler with Scoring Rubrics

# Unit # 6 : Paired Passages: Texts Sets from Fiction and Non-Fiction (5-6 weeks)

Objectives

* **Compare and contrast the structure** of two or more texts. (fiction and nonfiction)
* **Analyze** how the **structure of each text** contributes to its meaning and style (fiction and non-fiction).
* Determine **how the author uses figurative language and connotative meanings** in a text.
* Analyze the **impact of specific word choices** on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other text.
* Provide an **objective summary** of a text.
* Analyze in detail the **structure of a specific paragraph** in a text, including the **role of particular sentences** is developing and refining a key concept.
* Analyze a case in which two or more texts provide **conflicting information** on the same topic, and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.
* **Mini-Grammar Lessons**
  + Correct inappropriate shifts in pronoun number and person.
  + Correct vague pronouns.
  + Correctly use frequently confused words (ex: to, too, two).

Assessments

* Required: Minimum of one graded text dependent analysis questions based on objectives (in addition to final summative unit assessment)
* Written response (varying lengths)
* Objective quizzes/tests
* Class and/or homework activities directly related to objectives
* Required FINAL UNIT ASSESSMENT: Must include related cold text passages (3) with PA Core level multiple choice questions and text dependent response.

Instructional Guidance

Text sets related to curriculum in other subject areas are encouraged (ex: science, social studies, technology education, art, etc.)

Suggested Texts and Resources

* PA Core PSSA Scoring Rubrics and Item Samples
* PDE SAS
* Text passages/resources from anthology
* Grade level/Lexile level passages from readworks.org
* Common Core text exemplar list
* Current events articles

Texts related to Science and Social Studies Grade 8 curriculum

# Unit # 7: Argumentation: A Non-Fiction Unit (3-4 weeks)

Objectives

* Analyze how a text makes **connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events** (e.g. through comparisons, analogies, categories).
* Determine the **central idea** of a text and **analyze its development** over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas.
* Cite **text evidence** to support analysis of a text (explicit, inferences, conclusions, and generalizations).
* Determine an **author’s point of view or purpose** in a text.
* Analyze how an author **acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints**.
* Determine how the author **uses the meaning of words or phrases**, including figurative, connotative, or technical meanings, in a text.
* Analyze the **impact of specific word choices** on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.
* **Delineate and evaluate the argument** and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient.
* Recognize when **irrelevant evidence** is introduced.
* Analyze a case in which **two or more texts provide conflicting information** on the same topic, and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.
* **Mini-Grammar Lessons**
  + Choose words and phrases for effect.

Assessments

* Student written responses (varying lengths)
* Objective quizzes/tests
* Class and/or homework activities directly related to objectives

Instructional Guidance

Use a variety of non-fiction text styles during instruction. Text styles may include speeches, current events, letters to the editor, etc.

Suggested Texts and Resources

* PA Core PSSA Scoring Rubrics and Item Samples
* PDE SAS
* “Opposing Viewpoints” style resources (library)
* Grade level/Lexile level passages from readworks.org
* Common Core text exemplar list

# Unit # 8: Argumentative Research and Writing (2-3 weeks)

Objectives

* Conduct **short research** to gather **reliable, relevant**, and appropriate sources of information.
* Provide an **accurate citation** for a variety of sources of information.
* Appropriately and ethic ally **quote or paraphrase** the work of others.
* Introduce a claim for the intended audience by providing a **clear argumentative thesis statement.**
* Acknowledge and distinguishing the claim from alternate or opposing claims.
* Support writer’s purpose by **logically organizing** reasons and evidence.
* **Support claim** with logical reasoning and relevant evidence from sources to demonstrate an understanding of the topic or text.
* Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among claims, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
* Establish and maintain a **formal style**.
* Provide a **conclusion** that reinforces the claims and reasons presented.
* **Mini-Grammar Lessons**
  + Eliminate wordiness and redundancy.
  + Maintain consistency in tone and style.
  + Choose punctuation for effect.
  + Use an ellipsis to indicate an omission.

Assessments

* Short research essay
* Essays and written responses
* Graphic organizers
* Objective quizzes/tests
* Class and/or homework activities directly related to objectives
* REQUIRED: One cold argumentative prompt (not text dependent, given in one class period in test-like environment) and one research based essay (formal, typed, with peer and self-editing)

Instructional Guidance

Review and reinforce previously learned objectives, including those related to formal writing, citing text evidence and textual analysis. Prompts and topics for mini-research should be carefully selected to limit the likelihood of students simply copying ideas, essays, and structures directly from sources or online resources.

Suggested Texts and Resources

* Collaboration with library media specialist
* PSSA Argumentative scoring rubric
* iSearch materials/resources

# Unit # 9 : Novel Study (9 weeks)

Objectives

* Analyze components of literature such as character, setting, plot, symbolism, theme, tone, style, and mood.
* Analyze the effectiveness of the author’s use of various literary devices.
* Present appropriately in formal speaking situations.

Assessments

* Formal speech including multimedia or visual display (with grading rubric)
* Classroom/homework activities based on objectives above
* Objective quizzes/tests
* Open-ended text dependent student responses to literature
* Instructional Guidance

Instructional Guidance

Reinforce reading skills and literature analysis skills previously taught throughout the course.

Suggested Texts and Resources

* PA Core PSSA Scoring Rubrics and Item Samples
* PDE SAS
* PCSD Novel List titles – Grade 8